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the dead ; but that unity which arises from a common faith and a common object—a unity which finds its strongest bond in the pursuit of the same object, through diversity of means. It is such an union as this that might exist between us and a reformed Italian Church. And if such were established, though unwilling to mix up any mere political speculation with such a subject, we may be excused if we add the hope, that the establishment of a reformed National Church would be but the forerunner of the re-admission of Italy, free and united within itself, into the great brotherhood of independent nations.

We are sure our readers will cordially respond to the sentiments contained in the letter of Mr. Leyne to Sergeant Shee, which we reprint, as an act of justice to the character and feelings of the educated Roman Catholics of Ireland. The case referred to is that of Francesco and Ross Madiai, at Florence, which has excited so much public attention, and appears to have been simply as follows :

They are husband and wife, and, though of irreproachable character, were arrested on the 17th of August, 1851, on the charge of being Protestants, and, as such, reading the Bible, and endeavouring to induce others to do the same ; and the charge was summed up by accusing them of impiety and proselytism. On these charges they were at length brought to trial, on the 4th of June, 1852, (having been detained in prison, unheard, during the whole of the intervening period,) and were found guilty of having read the Scriptures, and of worshipping God in a way not prescribed by the Church of Rome. There was no suspicion or imputation of moral or political criminality attaching to the case. The public prosecutor frankly declared at the trial that there was no such accusation whatever, and that the prosecution was wholly and avowedly for their opposition to the religion of the Established Church of Tuscany. Upon this charge the Madiaiis were condemned by the Corte Regia of Florence, the husband, to 56 months of imprisonment with hard labour, at Volterra, and the wife, to 45 months' imprisonment, with three years more of police surveillance. And this sentence, on appeal, was affirmed by the Supreme Court of Florence.

Mr. Leyne's spirited letter is as follows :

" TO SERGEANT SHEE, M.P.

" Upper Backingham-street, Dublin,
October 29. 1852.

" Sir—I ask permission to address you a few words in reference to an occurrence which took place at the Catholic Conference in the Rotundo on yesterday.

" I was present on a ticket furnished to me as a member of the public press, and, therefore, could take no part in the discussion of any topic brought before the conference, else I should have yielded to my desire to remark upon the allusion you made to the case of the Madiai.

" As a Catholic and an Irishman, I was delighted at your bold and vehement denunciation of the barbarous tyranny of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. I was glad that at this moment, and in that Catholic assembly, one Irish representative had the manliness and honesty to express sentiments so just and noble.

" It is, indeed, an abominable and impious doctrine that men are to be imprisoned for religious opinions, and chastised for maintaining any form of doctrine, or for reading any work bearing on religious questions. But the notion that it is a crime for any man to read the Word of God in his private house is a theory so false, foul, and unholy, that one can only wonder how it can gain supporters amongst the followers of any religion who have for three centuries battled against persecution and proscription of the exact nature of the oppression you denounced. The Catholics of Ireland hold no such intolerant faith.

" It surely was not a greater tyranny for the British Government to prohibit the exercise of the Catholic faith in Ireland than for this black despot of the South to forbid his subjects the privilege of reading the Scriptures in their homes for their own private edification. The old penal laws form an exact precedent for the intolerant Cour Royale of Florence.

" It has been argued, I understand, in justification of the conduct of the Duke of Tuscany, that, as a Catholic sovereign, he had a perfect right to prevent the circu-

lation of the particular book for the perusal of which the Madiai have been subjected to penalties. I know not whether this teaching be a heresy, but it is a startling and monstrous dogma—one which would justify, in an extended application, the bloody propagandism of Machiavelli or of Cromwell, and strip consciences of all privilege and vocation. As a Catholic I refuse to swallow it. If a Catholic rob me I hand him over to justice—if he assault me I will defend myself. If a Catholic prince use despotic power and trample upon a people, are we to be told that the church will sanction the tyranny because the aggressor is a Catholic? Sir, it is a libel on Catholic truth and a disgrace to people to have such abominable tenets paraded as the teaching of the church.

" Believe it, Sir, that the genuine opinion of every man in Ireland who loves liberty, political and religious, goes with you upon this question.

" No statement of this case that has been brought before the public disproves the fact you represented.

" And I trust in God that, as long as Ireland is Catholic, we shall ever steadily hate the odious doctrines which justify religious persecution, and that men shall be found honest and courageous enough to condemn the acts of the tyrant, whether Catholic or Protestant, and to express sympathy with his victims.

" I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful servant,

" M. R. LEYNE."

(From the *Cork Southern Reporter*.)

" Every friend of liberty will read with pleasure the manly, energetic speech of Sergeant Shee. His noble denunciation of the outrageous violation of the principle of civil and religious liberty, in the case of the Madiai, will find an echo in the hearts of all who love freedom and hate oppression. It was absolutely necessary that some person in the Conference should, on the part of the Catholics of Ireland, proclaim to the world their detestation of the tyranny perpetrated at Florence in the name of religion. Sergeant Shee did the thing at the right time and in the right way. Though the editor of the *Tablet* had the baseness to stand up in an assembly met to promote religious equality, and defend the crime of the Tuscan Government, no one can charge the Catholics of Ireland with participating in his odious opinions. He stands alone. We could almost wish to see him in some country where his own principle of toleration could be applied to himself. This man is doing all he can, and very effectually too, to bring the Catholics of Ireland into discredit and disgrace."

Correspondence.

THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE RESPECTING THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Sir—Your correspondent, "One who Loves to hear the Truth," is surprised that you should have published an article showing how little the Bible tells us of the "life of the Blessed Virgin." He admits that a fact so notorious as the silence of Scripture about the Blessed Virgin has engaged the attention of learned Roman Catholics, and that they have accounted for it. Your correspondent's words are remarkable—"The Scriptures, you (Mr. Editor) say, tell us little or nothing about the Blessed Virgin Mary; they are wholly silent about her from the time of our Lord's ascension. Quite true, sir; but learned Roman Catholics have noticed that fact as well as you, and accounted for it," &c., &c. He then quotes several passages from Roman Catholic writers, which entirely bear out his assertion, that the Scriptures really do say little or nothing of the Blessed Virgin Mary. With this conclusion neither you (Mr. Editor) nor I are prepared to combat. But, unfortunately, on this, as on many other questions, amongst Romanists themselves, opinions are divided. I do not recognise among the list furnished by your correspondent any canonized saint or Pope. St. Bonaventure, a canonized saint, who holds a prominent place in the Romish calendar, writes—"Omnis Scriptura loquuntur de ea."—Serm. 13, in *Hex.* This passage I find quoted with the greatest approbation in Saint Liguori's "Glories of Mary"—thus "the whole of the Sacred Scriptures speak in praise of Mary." The words "in praise" are our interpretation; the original passage, as given by Bonaventure, is inserted in a note at foot of the page. Now, the authority of Liguori is undoubted. We know that all his works, and the "Glories of Mary" in particular, underwent twenty years' strict examination by the most competent authorities of the Church of Rome, being the "Sacred Congregation of Rites," of which the Pope is president. They unanimously declared that *not one word of his writings was worthy of censure*. According to Saints Bonaventure and Liguori, the Pope and all the sacred college, "the whole of the Sacred Scriptures speak of her"—plain contradiction to the assertion of the authorities quoted by your correspondent.

The edition of Liguori from which I quote is, or ought to be, of the very greatest authority; it is the only edition which bears the signature of authority; the date is 1852, and purported to be "printed for the Redemptorist Fathers of St. Mary's, Clepham" (p. 6); and CARDINAL Wiseman thus recognises this edition—"We

hereby approve of this translation of the "Glories of Mary," and cordially recommend it to the faithful. Nicholas, Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster, given at Westminster, on the Feast of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, 1852."

I now leave your correspondent to reconcile as he best may these contradictory statements.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,
October 19, 1852.
C. H. COLLETT.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—Allow me to correct a mistake which you have made in your last number, page 109, where you say that "the dogma of the immaculate conception has been at length declared, by the successor of St. Peter, to be an article of faith." This is not the case. You were probably deceived by the facts, that the church observes a festival in honour of the immaculate conception, and that she makes mention of it in her prayers; and, also, that the present Pope has taken into consideration the propriety of affirming the doctrine more solemnly. But, as far as I am aware, he has not yet done so, and the doctrine is but matter of pious belief, and is not yet an article of faith. It is, perhaps, natural that you Protestants should be careless in this matter; but a Catholic knows that it is extremely important to be accurate in observing the time when any doctrine becomes an article of faith; for, previous to that time, it may be doubted or denied without mortal sin. We all know, for example, that St. Bernard is now a saint in heaven, although he opposed this very doctrine of the immaculate conception; but any one who shall deny it after it has once been made an article of faith by the successor of St. Peter, would, no doubt, be guilty of damnable sin. I am, Sir, &c.,

A LOVER OF ACCURACY.

We cheerfully insert this letter, as we have always promised to insert any corrections of misstatements which we may inadvertently have made. The sentence for which our correspondent takes us to task was, perhaps, incautiously worded; but if he will turn to p. 23, he will find that we have proved that, even though the doctrine be not yet formally declared an article of faith, the authorities of the Church of Rome have practically made it *de fide* to a large and increasing body in the communion, by sanctioning the festival and office of the immaculate conception.

We have no space here to discuss the question whether the church can make any doctrine *now* an article of faith which was not always so. According to the Roman theory, it would seem as if certain parts of the road to heaven got choked up in the course of ages, and as if the church is obliged occasionally to post "no thoroughfare" on the paths by which saints of old made their way to glory. We believe that it cannot be so necessary to our salvation to believe any doctrines of which the Christians of the first centuries were ignorant, or which they did not know that they were bound to believe. But, as we have said, we cannot discuss this question here.

ALLEGED LOST BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—As a constant reader of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN I would make no strange statement, as to say that there are twenty books of the Holy Scripture lost. He even surpasses the great Roman Catholic luminary, Doctor Cahill, who could tell the people of Liverpool, in June last, of only seventeen lost books (See McCabe's Telegraph, 12th June last). I believe, had the doctor read the last number of the CATHOLIC LAYMAN before he delivered his speech, the number would have been still smaller; but I am still astonished that Dr. Cahill and the "Inquirer," Celbridge, men of no small knowledge, would be so little acquainted with the Douay Bible, &c.; for they say that the following books are lost: That of Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahias, Iddo, Jeremias, and Jehu, &c. But I would ask them who wrote the book of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles? I do not know what might be their answer, but I know the answer that the Douay annotators give. See the preface to the 1st Book of Samuel, 1st Book of Kings, and the 1st Book of Chronicles, Douay Bible, which explicitly show that these books were not written at one time, nor by one man, but refer to the above-named prophets as being the writers. It is true, the preface to the 1st Book of Chronicles says, that the present Books of Chronicles are not the ancient Chronicles, or words of the days, &c.; but the writer has to acknowledge, at the end, that they are the same books, only revised and abridged by Ezra. Now, Ezra is the acknowledged arranger of the canon of Scripture (i.e., the Old Testament)—an opinion which the Jews have always maintained, and in which the Christian Church has universally concurred. Dr. Pridgeaux, Dean of Norwich, gives a full and learned account of the work which Ezra is admitted to have performed. "Ezra," says the doctor, "corrected all the errors which